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If, in a word, we think of the numberless brooks and mountain torrents, the springs, besides the warm ones already mentioned, the reservoirs, the aqueducts and watercourses, remains of which exist about the plain of Gennesareth and elsewhere (Recovery of Jerusalem, p. 272), the fountains, the cisterns, and the wells, we have a land in which there was no lack of water, and one surprisingly favored in this respect above Judea.

A Peculiarity of Palestine.—In Greece and Italy and Spain, it is the mountainous tract which is beset with banditti—the level country which is safe. In Palestine, on the contrary, the mountain tracts are comparatively secure, though infested with villages of hereditary ruffians here and there ; but the plains, with hardly an exception, are more or less dangerous. Perhaps the most striking contrast is the passage from the Hauran and plain of Damascus, to the uplands of the Lebanon and anti-Lebanon, with their quiet villages, and fruit-gardens, breathing an atmosphere almost of European comfort and security. The cause is soon told. Palestine is an island in a desert waste—but from this very fact it is also an island in the midst of pirates. The Bedouin tribes are the corsairs of the wilderness ; the plains which run into the mountains are the creeks into which they naturally penetrate. Far up the plains of Philistia and Sharon come the Arabs of the Tih ; deep into the centre of Palestine, into the plain of Esdraelon, especially when the harvest has left the fields clear for pasturage, come the Arabs of the Haurân and of Gilead. The same levels which of old gave an opening to the chariots of the Canaanites, now admit the inroad of these wandering shepherds. On one occasion even in ancient times, there was a migration of Bedouins into Palestine on a gigantic scale ; when the Midianites and Amalekites, and children of the east, encamped against the Israelites in their maritime plain, “with their cattle and their tents,” and “pitched” their tents in Esdraelon, and “lay along the valley like grasshoppers for multitude.”¹ This, doubtless, was a great exception, and in the flourishing times of the Jewish Monarchy and of the Roman Empire, the hordes of the Desert were kept out, or were, as in the case of the tribes of Petrea in the time of the Herods, brought within the range of a partial civilization. But now, like the sands of their own deserts which engulf the monuments of Egypt, no longer defended by a watchful and living population, they have broken in upon the country far and near ; and in the total absence of solitary dwelling-places—in the gathering together of all the settled inhabitants into villages,—and in the walls which, as at Jerusalem, enclose the cities round, with locked gates and guarded towers—we see the effect of the constant terror which they inspire. It is the same peculiarity of Eastern life, as was exhibited in its largest proportions in the vast fortifications with which Nineveh and Babylon shut themselves in against the attacks of the Bedouins of the Assyrian Desert, and in the great wall which still defends the Chinese empire against the Mongolian tribes, who are to the civilization of Northern Asia, what the Arabs are to that of the south.

¹ Judges vi. 3, 5, 33; vii. 12. See Chapter IX.